DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 456 179 UD 034 351

AUTHOR	Adams, Kimberly Rene
TITLE	African-American Father Roles: A Review of Literature.
PUB DATE	2001-02-00
NOTE	36p.; In: National Association of African American Studies & National Association of Hispanic and Latino Studies: 2000 Literature Monograph Series. Proceedings (Social Sciences Section) (Houston, TX, February 21-26, 2000).
PUB TYPE	Information Analyses (070) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Blacks; *Cultural Influences; *Fathers; *Parent Influence; *Parent Responsibility
IDENTIFIERS	African Americans

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the African American father's role, examining culture as it relates to social and economic barriers to paternal responsibilities. Some of the literature supports the assumption that African American fathers are ineffective and contribute to a tangle of pathology. Some claim that social scientists have concentrated too heavily on the lowest income African American families. The effectiveness of African American fathers is viewed by some as being dependent on their ability to support the family. This literature review concentrates on barriers that hinder African American fathers from parenting fully. Empirical research that emphasizes the functioning of African American men in a non-deviant family context can provide a foundation to guide practitioners. This paper expands the understanding of African American fathering by utilizing the strengths perspective, exploring the various roles that African American men play from a non-pathological perspective, and examining fathers who are in the home as opposed to the majority of research that emphasizes fathers who are absent from home. It also challenges the way society currently thinks about African American men, offering implications for social work practice on how to interact with African American families. (Contains 55 references.) (SM)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 456 179

AFRICAN-AMERICAN FATHER ROLES: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

MS. KIMBERLY RENE ADAMS
LOYOLA UNIVERSITY-CHICAGO
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

L. Berry
Nat. Assoc. of African American Studies

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

UD034351

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

African-American Father Roles: A Review of Literature

INTRODUCTION

There has been a dearth of research in the 1990s on the effects of paternal influences on children. It is generally acknowledged by social work professionals and commentators in the mass media that the father's role is changing, with men being more involved in child care (McAdoo, 1979). This new pattern emerged in the 1960s and by the mid-1970s there was an expansion of interest in the area of fathers and their roles. This research will examine the African-American father's role by focusing on culture as it relates to social and economic barriers to paternal responsibilities. This review of literature will include an in-depth analysis of both classic theorists such as Liebow (1967) and Billingsley (1968) as well as contemporary theorists, such as McAdoo (1988), Taylor (1991), and Boyd-Franklin (1985).

Sociological research related to the socialization of the child has historically been described as matricentric in character (Lamb, 1979). Most researchers believe the father's role is only now being understood (Biller, 1992). The African-American father

may be even more neglected from social science literature than their counter- part (White fathers). Furthermore, the exploration of the African-American father's role in the socialization of his children is almost non-existent in social science literature. From a deficit model, the African-American father is usually seen as a man who is not active in and has no power, control, or interest in the socialization of his children (Boyd-Franklin, 1985). These stereotypes have impacted the societal perception of African-American men as fathers.

The classic literature supports the assumption that African-American fathers were ineffective figures that contributed to a tangle of pathology (Moynihan, 1969). In response to the aforementioned assumptions, it has been claimed that social scientists have concentrated too heavily on the lowest income group of African-American families while neglecting other African-American families (Billingsley, 1968). The effectiveness of the African-American father is viewed, by some, as being dependent on his ability to aid in supporting his family (Liebow, 1967). This literature review will concentrate on the various barriers that hinder African-American fathers from completely parenting.

The negative portrayal of African-American men as absent from their families and remiss as providers has left social work practitioners devoid of basic knowledge or effective intervention strategies. Empirical research that focuses on the functioning of African-American men in a non-deviant family context can fill the void of a much neglected area of African-American family research and provide a foundation from which practitioners can be guided (Taylor, Leashore, and Tolliver, 1988). Research scholars, family therapists, social work practitioners, and even mothers have devoted only sparse attention to the family role performance of African-American men. For example, Cazenave's study in (1979) revealed no reference on this issue within a family context. The participation of African-American males in family life has recently become a focal point for researchers.

Finally, the goal of this paper is to expand and enhance the understanding of African-American fathering by utilizing the strengths' perspective. This review of literature seeks to contribute to the field of social work by 1) exploring the various roles which African-American men play from a non-pathological perspective 2) examining fathers that are in the home opposed to the majority of research which focuses on African-American men that are

absent from the home 3) challenge the way society currently thinks about African-American men and 4) offer implications for social work practice in how to interact with African-American families.

Classic Literature on African-American Fathers

Sociological research related to the socialization of the child has been described as matricentric in character (Lamb, 1979). Most researchers believe that the role of the father in the socialization of their children is only beginning to be understood (Biller, 1982). The exploration of the African-American father's role in the socialization of his children is almost non-existent in social science. From a matricentric researcher's perspective, the African-American father is usually seen as an invisible man within the family context (Boyd-Franklin, 1985).

The effectiveness of the African-American father is viewed in the literature as being dependent on his ability to aid in supporting his family and to share his aid Liebow (1967) conducted a unique study in that he used the participant/observer technique to intensively study a group of lower-economic, African-American males in Washington, D. C. His findings suggest, unequivocally that the African-American, lower class male is not

psychologically isolated from white middle class family norms; he has not created a distinct family subculture of illegitimacy and serial monogamy that is perpetuated by cultural transmission. According to Liebow (1967), African- Americans have learned to resort to unstable family behavior as a direct response to societal failures (unemployment, low-income, uninteresting jobs, discrimination, and racism) which he encounters in life. Despite these negative stereotypes on the African-American father and family, there remains a very strong sense of family unity throughout African-American culture (p. 204).

It is generally held that African-American fathers are absent, or if present, they are not vitally interested in their families. In some of the older literature, African-American fathers were described as in effective figures that contributed to a tangle of pathology (Moynihan, 1969). In response to the aforementioned assumptions, it has been claimed that social scientists have concentrated too heavily on the lowest income group of African-American families while neglecting middle-class or intact families (Billingsley, 1968).

McAdoo (1979) studied the components of the father-child interaction process and the relationship of the development of

social competence in African-American preschool children. He used an ecological approach to observe the interaction between 56 working and middle-class African-American families living in Maryland. Interviewers observed and recorded parent-child interactions in two home interviews where. In the second interview, only the father and child were present and the Cognitive Home Environment Scale was administered (Radin and Sonquist, 1968). The results revealed that a great deal of interaction occurred in the father-child relationship. The majority of interactions observed were warm, loving, and supportive, which was a finding similar to Radin's (1972) study with White fathers. The fathers in McAdoo's (1979) study tended to have more non-verbal interaction with their daughters than with their sons. When they disapproved of their daughter's activities, they tended to indicate it on a non-verbal level. No relationship was found between paternal nurturance or restrictiveness and the child's self-esteem. The African-American children in the sample felt good about themselves and felt that their parents valued them (McAdoo, 1979).

Provider Role

African-American fathers carry multiple roles including that of provider, role model, and educator. During the late 1970s and early 1980s, these have been the predominant roles which describe African-American fathers. Price-Boham and Skeen (1979) note that the effectiveness of African-American fathers in their role as provider is viewed as dependent on his ability to aid in supporting his family. In many instances when African-American fathers could not meet the financial demands of their families, they internalized that the family would be fare better had he left the home. Thus, his absence was encouraged by the government, allowing the mother and children to receive federal assistance.

Most of the sociological literature relating to the provider role of the father is supported by McAdoo (1981) who contends that men want to be financially responsible for their children. In his research with middle-income African-American fathers, Cazenave (1979) found in his study of 54 letter carriers, that the greater the economic security, the more active the father became in the childrearing function. Research that focuses on any one role (nurturer, provider, or decision-maker) may provide misinformation on the African-American father and how he

nurtures his child. For example, African-American, middle-class husbands participate more in childrearing than White, middle-class husbands (Cazenave, 1979). What should be taken into account are factors such as economic constraints and how racial discrimination can affect individual assessments of performance in family roles. From a cultural perspective, family roles may vary or have distinctive qualities within the context of subcultures (Taylor, Leashore, and Tolliver, 1988). As a result, various family structures emerge, thus influencing the father-child relationship.

Family Structure

In an interview study of 100 African-American teenage fathers, Rivara, Sweeney, and Henderson (1986) found that 18 months after the birth of their child, 12 percent of the subjects were still living with the children. In addition, 25 percent reported that they saw the child daily and 28 percent reported that they saw the child 36 times per week. Many fathers are not always physically or emotionally absent from their children and various family structures are just as adaptive for the father-child relationship. The rise in divorce rates, younger women having children, and the inability of African-American men to find and maintain secure

jobs has resulted in the restructuring of the traditional family units (McAdoo, 1981). As a result, social work professionals have focused their interests on various family structures and how these structures influence these dyads.

It is not at all uncommon for African-American children in this culture and era to be raised in large extended families where a number of relatives and non-relatives with a vested interest provide role models and accept some childrearing responsibilities (Boyd-Franklin, 1989). A given family might include mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, grandmothers, grandfathers, aunts, uncles, cousins, step-parents, boarders, and friends who may live in the same household or in close proximity (Billingsley, 1968, Stack, 1975). The key point is that parenting may be a shared task that goes beyond the traditional nuclear family structure.

Classic studies of African-American families reveal the bias on the emphasis of broken homes and the non-supporting male. Joyce Aschenbrenner (1973) conducted research to replace such biases by emphasizing matriarchal households and kinship networks as adaptive strategies. Yet, the assumption still appears that many African-American families are incomplete or are characterized as an unorthodox version of the standard U.S. family

rather than an institution in its own right. Aschenbrenner (1973) describes five types of household compositions in her investigation of Chicago families representing several ethnic backgrounds: (1) conjugal-nuclear, which consist of the husband, wife, and unmarried children; (2) conjugal-extended, which consists of parents and unmarried or separated sons and daughters and their children; (3) matrifocal-nuclear consisting of a mother and young children; (4) matrifocal-extended, which consists of mother and unmarried or separated daughters and their children; and (5) single men residing alone (p. 260). The primary difference between matrifocal and conjugal household structures is the presence of an adult male as husband and father on a permanent basis.

The statistics often mask the reality that although a "biological father" may not be present in the home, a mother's boyfriend or a step-parent may fulfill some of the aspects of the parental role. As stated earlier, these men assume a strong role in fathering children who are not biologically theirs as structures vary greatly.

Finally, it can be assumed that African-American family structures vary greatly, and it is important to take these differences

into account when conducting social science research or developing practice intervention strategies.

Summary of Major Classic Research Studies

In a comparative-exploratory study observing African-American and White fathers and their preschool children, Baumrind (1973) found sex differences in the father's expectations and the behavior of their children. Fathers of African-American girls appeared to be significantly different from fathers of White girls. Baumrind (1973) found that African-American daughters of authoritarian parents were exceptionally independent and at ease in the nursery school setting where the observation took place. Study results found that African-American fathers socialize their children more than White fathers and the results of that process strongly correlate to the development of high competence in their daughters.

For African-American paternal relationships, given socioeconomic class and other variables, there is a need to develop boundaries, quality, and quantity of the father-child relationships over time. Once these relationships are explored on a higher level, then more sophisticated research designs can be used to examine

various kinds of socialization activities such as dances, outings and trips. Interaction patterns can also be studied in the home or in educational settings.

The most comprehensive and well controlled study concerning father-absence and the girl's development was conducted by Hetherington (1972). The aim of this stud was to explore the effects of time and reason for paternal separation on the behavior of father-absent, adolescent girls. The subjects consisted of three groups (N = 24) of lower and lower-middle class, firstborn, adolescent, White girls between the ages of 13 and 17 years of age. The most striking finding was that both groups of father-absent girls had great difficulty in interacting comfortably with men and male peers (most of the girls from father-absent homes reported that they were very insecure with males). In contrast, all three groups of girls generally appeared to have appropriate interactions with their mothers and with female adults and peers.

In comparison, Bannon and Southern (1980) compared women's self-concepts and their modes of relating to men from 15 father-present women who came from intact homes; 15 father-absent women with no older brothers and who experienced the

death of their father early in life; 15 father-absent women with no older brothers who experienced father loss due to divorce; and 12 father-absent women with one or more older brothers whose parents divorced. Results revealed no significant differences amongst these 4 groups in most areas of self-concept or interpersonal relationships with both similar aged and older men.

One of the very few studies which explored African-American men as nurturers was conducted by Logan (1983). Traditionally, African-American fathers have not been viewed in the literature as emotionally or socially close to their children. Logan (1983) examined African-American fathers' roles as nurturing parents. Data was collected from 15 purposely selected African-American fathers, aged 20-45. The educational background of the men ranged from some high-school to graduate degrees. Her research question examined: (1) attitudes about being a father; (2) role in childbearing; (3) attitudes about physical and non-physical demonstrations of love; and (4) father-child interaction. The nurturing parent was defined as one who is emotionally close to the child, accepting him/her, and helping to build confidence and competence. The author concluded that all of the fathers viewed nurturance as an important, highly valued

dimension of their role and self-identity. Other findings support that the father's age does not seem to play an important part in the style of nurturance. Career can impact the quantity of time, but attitude determines quality of time spent. It is note- worthy to mention that while all fathers endorsed the nurturing father role and expressed positive attitudes towards parenting, over 50 percent did not see their own fathers as nurturing.

Contemporary Literature on African American Fathers

Past African-American father research stressed father absence and pathology (Moynihan, 1969). During the past decade, the literature on African-American fathers has changed dramatically, yet it is not extensive. The literature on African-American fathers prior to the mid-1980s largely ignored, distorted, or minimized the parenting role of men (Boyd-Franklin, 1989). African-American fathers are perhaps the most misunderstood members of African-American families. The image of these fathers is that of an absent or peripheral figure. There is a great variability in the role of the African-American father and the fact that his identity is tied to his ability to financially provide for a family, in sometimes adverse economic circumstances, could easily give rise

to a perception of these men as non-family oriented or uncaring (Hines and Boyd-Franklin, 1987). Adverse, monetary hardships have the potential of influencing an African-American man's feelings about himself and his ability to function in his role as father. Earlier studies on African-American fathers tended to rely on White, middle-class, western, and/or mainstream families and their primary frame of reference (McAdoo, 1981: Staples and Johnson, 1993).

More recent studies, however, suggest that African-American fathers, like other men, play a vital role in the life of family members (McAdoo and McAdoo, 1989; Taylor, Chatters, Tucker and Lewis, 1990). Recent literature provides a more balanced and representative portrayal of African-American fathers. This change is due partly to the inclusion of middle-class men among the research subjects analyzed as well as the documenting of varying attitudes, degrees of family involvement, and responsibilities assumed by African-American fathers (Christmon, 1990).

Many problems with research on African-American fathers are the result of the use of inappropriate theoretical perspectives and racial group comparisons (Amato, 1994). It is important to

mention that few social science researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers have acknowledged the increasing numbers of African-American fathers who are raising their children alone. The number of African-American children being raised by their fathers has significantly increased from 20 percent in 1970, to 36 percent in 1993 (Amato, 1994).

Adolescent African-American Fathers

The emergent literature on African-American, adolescent fathers examines distinctly different patters of fatherhood experiences (i.e., age at paternity, timing of fatherhood in relation to work and education, relationship with the child's mother and number of children). African-American, adolescent fathers have a higher probability of living apart from their children than do older fathers (Danziger and Nichols-Casebolt, 1988). A report of teenage mothers' families (Danziger and Radin, 1990) suggest that a adolescent father's absence from the home does not necessarily reflect a form of non-involvement in parenting. On the contrary, minority fathers were more likely to be involved in parenting than were White fathers (Danziger and Radin, 1990).

Kissman (1995) reinforces the importance of examining childrearing practices within the subjects' families of origin. Christmon (1990) found that subjects whose parents or siblings were themselves early parents, viewed early parenting less negatively than did subjects from families in which members became parents later in life. He also found that the assumption of parental responsibility (as reflected in paternal behavior) was influenced more by the adolescent father's own self-image and role expectations than by the expectations of his partner or parents (Christmon, 1990). Therefore, the young men who had a positive sense of themselves and their potential to be good fathers seemed better prepared to negotiate the complex, developmental challenges faced by adolescent fathers.

African-American, adolescent fathers are faced with distinguishing hardships which adult fathers may not face. For example, unemployment, low educational attainment, immaturity, and a lack of life experiences. These life circumstances can have a dramatic impact on the minority adolescent's ability to fulfill his role as a father. African-American, adolescent fathers are presented with unique challenges which can hinder their ability to parent. These young men are still, themselves growing and developing and

find it difficult to distinguish their needs from the needs of their children. Nevertheless, these fathers would financially provide for their children. Christmon (1990) found that 58 percent of the children's fathers were reported as good or excellent providers.

Allen and Dougherty (1996) conducted a study on the responsibility of fatherhood as perceived by African-American adolescent fathers. Ten African-American, adolescent fathers were given in-depth interviews where they described what being a father meant to them, in addition to exploring obstacles faced when meeting their paternal aspirations. Allen and Dougherty (1996) findings suggested that perceptions of fatherhood shape the desires and behaviors of some adolescent fathers. The most prevalent themes reported included being there, responsibility, and the importance of fathers to families. It is believed that most of this group articulated a deeper understanding of the experience of fatherhood than common perceptions might suggest. Childhood experiences with their own fathers shaped their perceptions of the kind of father they might be with their own child (Allen and Dougherty, 1996).

Non-Custodial African-American Fathers

Current evidence provides little insight into how non-custodial, African-American fathers perceive their responsibilities as fathers and how they perform in the roles which they define. Social theorists and researchers know little about how non-custodial, African-American fathers perceive their relationship with their children and the emotional, social, and economic choices they make regarding that relationship. The non-custodial, father's role appears to be vague, ill-defined, and understood primarily in terms of the economic support he provides to his children. Increasingly, the ideal non-custodial father also provides some form of emotional support (Hammer, 1997). The ideal image of both the traditional father and non-traditional (non-custodial) father ranks financial support as the primary aspect of an African-American man's role from a paternal frame of reference.

Past research clearly substantiates the negative image of African-American fathers. The limited studies on this group of fathers suggest that most fathers tend to have little contact with their children and play a minimal role in their children's lives. Nonetheless, previous research shows that when non-custodial, fathers play an active role, it tends to be recreational and social

rather than instrumental (Furstenberg, 1987). However, more recent studies suggest that non-custodial, African-American fathers do play a substantial role in the lives of their children.

Non-custodial, African-American fathers are confronted with barriers that hinder their role performance. Rasheed and Johnson (1995) assert that African-American fathers incorporate dominant societal expectations of adulthood and paternity. In an attempt to incorporate these expectations, African-American fathers often find themselves torn bi-culturally in terms of their awareness of dominant eurocentric expectations of paternity and their unique cultural values. It is important that this group of fathers discover viable solutions that will off set their physical absence from their children. If visitation rights and child support obligations are not legally determined, then the father-child relationship must rely on the parent's ability to comprise by placing the welfare of the child first.

African-American Father Absence

The highly valued role of father/provider has implications for absent fathers. An African-American father who is unable to provide financial resources may feel that he no longer has a family

role, and therefore, physically distance himself from his children. The frequency of contact with his children may be connected to his perception of usefulness as a provider (Wade, 1994). Father presence and absence can be viewed on a continuum. Cause, onset, duration, and degree of father absence, as well as the availability of father substitutes (including the mother) can result in a wide range of outcomes for children (Shin, 1978). Other extended family and peer relationships may be able to compensate for the father's absence. A major difference between classic and more contemporary research on father absence is that classic theorists emphasize father absence without acknowledging the broader spectrum and realizing that his absence does not always have pathological consequences for the children. It is the culture of African-American families to utilize family substitutes who can be just as effective as the biological parent in childrearing.

Hammer (1997) conducted a qualitative study of the roles of non-custodial, African-American fathers by exploring the men's perspective on fatherhood from a traditional view. Thirty-eight, adult, non-custodial, African-American fathers based their perceptions of parenting on their own childhood experiences with their fathers. Their perspective on the roles and responsibility of a

father contrasted sharply with that of dominant culture. These fathers perceived that they played an essential role in the lives of their children. Furthermore, these fathers cherished the bond with their own sons while acknowledging what they lacked with their fathers, according to Hammer (1997). Primarily, they insisted that spending time with their children was their most essential fatherhood function, regardless of how much money they were able to provide for their children's well-being. The subjects indicated that a man's presence, his love, and his affection were essential ingredients for the optimal upbringing of a child.

Cultural Perspective of Father Roles

African-American men are expected to assimilate into the dominate society and accept mainstream values and conceptualizations of fatherhood as if these ideals reflected their own reality. The following will be a review of African-American scholars who have contributed to the understanding of the paternal role in relation to the African-American culture. Mainstream researchers on family life development have offered several theories to explain the functioning of African-American families in American society (McAdoo, 1988; Hill, 1993; Billingsley, 1958;

Boyd-Franklin, 1985). There are four major theories used to examine African-American family systems: cultural deprivation theory, matriarchy theory, exchange theory, and ecological theory. African-American researchers sometimes adapted, criticized or modified these theories.

White and Parham's (1990) analysis of the deprivation-theoretical model indicated that theorists who support this philosophy, assumed that years of racism and discrimination have deprived African-Americans of the strength to develop healthy self esteem as well as legitimate family structures (Moynihan, 1969). This model has been used to differentiate African-Americans from others in society and it operated on the premise that inadequate exposure to European values and customs required cultural enrichment. White and Parham (1990) also analyzed the African-American matriarchy as a variant of the deprivation model. The African-American matriarchy model has provided social theorists with assumptions about the roles they play.

Staples (1993) noted that matriarchy was seen as a pathological form of family life where the female dominated the family system. According to this perspective, the African-American female became the matriarch since society was

unwilling to permit the African-American male to assume the legal, psychological, and social positions necessary to become the dominant force within his family (McAdoo, 1988).

Choice and exchange theory have also been identified as a conceptual framework used to understand the context of the African-American family process (McAdoo, 1988). This theory indicates that African-American fathers make choices in the operations of their family roles. Fathers will choose negative roles or refuse to play some roles within the family when access to economic and social resources are perceived to be unavailable. The underlying assumption of this theory is that economic, educational, and political influences limit the father's choices and options in his exchanges within the family. Finally, Peters (1988) sees the ecological framework as a move to understand African-American family functioning in a less ethnocentrically biased manner. The assumption of the ecological theory is that fathers may play a variety of roles in the family which can lead to positive outcomes. Fathers may use a variety of coping strategies to control negative outside influences in the performance of their nurturing and supportive roles.

Very few studies have been found that evaluated the father's ability to cope when severe economic depression occurs. Gibbs (1994) discussed educational and other structural barriers as it related to fathers fulfilling their financial obligations. He noted that African-American males have been coerced by public (social agencies) and ignored by the private sector (employment). Basically, African-American men may experience both financial and emotional stress as it relates to their provider role. A further illustration is Bowman's (in press) study where he found a link between unemployment and family estrangement in a national study of African-American fathers. His findings from the literature examine the impact of massive reindustrialization in the urban communities which noted how the loss of jobs and employment opportunities created vulnerability in the lives of many fathers, including the paternal relationship.

Weaknesses of these theories have been identified by African-American research scholars such as Billingsley (1968) who reacted to the negative evaluations of African-Americans as pathological or culturally deprived by Eurocentric researchers. It has been assumed by many that the African-American family system was a viable unit. Peters (1988) provided an excellent

critique of research approaches such as the cultural deprivation approach used in studying parenting roles in African-American families. From this perspective, families who experienced enslavement lack the cultural background to fulfill the various family roles expected of those living in Western society. Thus, cultural deprivation has lead to a number of social and psychological problems in the adjustment of African-American men. More importantly, their role performance of provider, nurturer, and protector within the family. Peters (1990) suggested that these theories do not adequately take into account the demands, extreme pressures, and social constraints placed on African-American fathers.

Conclusion

A significant body of literature focusing on the role of African-American men within in a family context has emerged over the past decade. This literature does not support the traditional conception of the family as a pathological unit where the father is either absent or uninvolved with his partner and children. What primarily distinguishes the emerging scholarship is its' emphasis on the unity, stability, and adaptability of the African-American

family. Research that focuses on intact, economically stable families has begun to paint a very different picture of the contemporary African-American father from a family system perspective. This research suggests that African-American fathers play an essential parental role (McAdoo, 1988).

A descriptive study conducted by McAdoo (1989) found that 135 African-American fathers generally perceived the experience of fatherhood positively. The majority of fathers felt that activities such as diapering, (58 percent), feeding (61 percent), bathing (58 percent) and dressing (57 percent) should be a shared responsibility. In essence, recent research focusing on fatherhood did not support the traditional view of African-American fathers as being absent or insignificant.

Bartz and Levine (1979) did a comparative study of lower income African-American, Chicano, and Caucasian fathers. They found that more African-American fathers believed in a) the value of strictness, b) encouraging their children's involvement in decision making and c) expressing love and concern. At the same time, they voiced a desire to regulate their children's behavior in order to assure obedience and achievement. Allen and Dougherty (1996) found that African- American fathers reported rewarding

their sons by hugging and kissing, whereas White fathers rewarded their children with gifts. In contrast, McAdoo (1979) found that fathers of preschoolers were more likely to reward good behavior with praise than with hugs. African-American fathers appear to favor childrearing strategies that involve some combination of warmth and support as well as firm control. A second study conducted by McAdoo (1988) noted the positive correlation of financial stability and fathers who were present and attentive towards their children's needs.

It is clearly evidenced by the literature that African-American men value their role as fathers. They not only provide for their children but they nurture the child as well. The contribution which these men make to their families is substantial and should be noticed on a societal level.

REFERENCES

Ahmeduzzaman, M. & Roopnarine, J. (1992). Social demographic factors, functioning style, social support, and father's involvement with preschoolers in African-American families. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 54*, 699-707.

Arditti, J. A. (1991). Child support, non-compliance, and divorced fathers: Rethinking the role of paternal involvement. *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage, 14*, (34), 107-119.

Aschenbrenner, J. (1973). Extended families among Black Americans. *Journal of Comparative Studies, 4*, 257-268.

Barbarian, 0. (1983). Coping with ecological transition by Black families: A psychological mode. *Journal of Community Psychology* 11, 308-322.

Bartz, K. W. and Levine, B. S. (1978). Child rearing by Black parents. A description and comparison to Anglo and Chicano parents. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 40(4)*, 709-720.

Belsky, J. (1986). Adolescent fatherhood in the context of the transition of parenthood. In A. Elster, & M. Lamb (Eds.). *Adolescent Fatherhood* (pp. 107-122). New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Biller, H. B. (1993). *Fathers and Families: Paternal Factors in Child Development*. Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc.

Biller, H. B. (1982). Fatherhood: Implications for child and adult development. In B.B. Wolman (Ed.). *Handbook of Developmental Psychology*, (pp. 87-95). N.Y.: Wiley.

Billingsley, A. (1968). *Black Families in White America*. New York: Prentice-Hall.

Billingsley, A. (1992). *Climbing Jacob's Ladder: The Enduring Legacy of African-American Families*. New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc.

Bowman, P. and Sanders, R. (1998). Unmarried African-American fathers: A comparative life span analysis. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies, 29(l)*, 39-56.

Boyd-Franklin, N. (1989). *Black Families in Therapy: A Multi-Systems Approach*. New York: Guilford Press.

Boyd-Franklin, N. (1985). A psycho-educational perspective on Black parenting. In H.P. McAdoo and J.L. McAdoo (Eds.). *Black Children*, (pp. 195-209). CA: Sage Pub.

Cazenave, N. (1979). Middle income Black fathers: An analysis of the provider role. *Family Coordinate, 28(1),* 53-59.

Chadiha, L. Danziger, S. (1995). The African-American teen mother. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal, 12(2)*, 83-100.

Chatters, L., Tucker, M., Lewis, E. (1990). Developments in research on Black families. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 52* (4), 993-1014.

Christmon, K. (1990). Parental responsibility and self-image of African-American fathers. Families in *Society: Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, 563-567.

Cochran, D. (1997). African-American father: A decade review of the literature. *Families in Society: Journal of Contemporary Human Services*.

Cochran, D. (1997). African-American father's and focus groups: A group approach to increasing visibility in research. *Social Work With Groups*, 20(3). Haworth Press, Inc.

Davis, L. (1990). Trends in themes of African-American family research. In R. Staples (Ed.). *The Black Family: Western Journal of Black Studies, 14* (4), 191-195.

DiAngi, P. (1976). Erikson's theory of personality development as applied to the Black child's perspective. *Journal of Psychiatric Care, 14(4),* 184-185.

DuBois, W. E. B. (1908). *The Negro American Family.* Atlanta: Atlanta U. Press.

Frazier, E. F. (1939). *The Negro Family in Chicago.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Gibbs, J. T. (1994). Anger in young Black males: Victims or victimizers. R. J. Majors, and J. Gordon (Eds.). *The American Black Male: His Present and Future Status*, pp. 129-143. Chicago: Nelson Hall.

Greene, B. (1997). Psychotherapy with African-American women: Integrating feminists and psycho-dynamic models. *Social Work, 67(3)*, 300-321.

Hammer, J. (1997). The fathers of "fatherless" Black children. *Families in Society: Journal of Contemporary Human Services.*

Hill, R. (1972). *The Strengths of Black Families.* New York: Emerson Hall.

Hill, R. (1997). *The Strengths of African-American Families: Twenty-Five Years* Later. Washington, D. C.: R & B Publishers.

Hill, R. B. (1993). *Research on the African-American Family: A holistic perspective*. Connecticut: Auburn House.

Hines, P. & Boyd-Franklin, N. (1987). *Black Families.* In M. K. Ho (Ed). *Family Therapy With Ethnic Minorities* (pp. 84-107). CA: Sage Publications.

Hyde, B. L. & Texidor, M. S. (1988). A description of the fathering experience among Black fathers. In R. Staples (Ed). *The Black Family: Essays and Studies*, (pp. 157-164). CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co.

Lamb, M. (1997). *The Role of the Father in Child Development*, (3rd Ed.). New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc..

Liebow, E. (1967). *Tally's Corner: A Study of Negro Street Corner Men*. Canada: Little Brown & Company.

Logan, S. (1983). Fathers as nurturers. Sociological Abstracts No. P5, 718 (New York): Chicago University Press.

McAdoo, H. P. (1988). *Black Families*. CA: Sage Publications.

McAdoo, H. P. (1988). The roles of Black Fathers in the socialization of Black children. In McAdoo, J. L. (Ed). *Black Families*, (257- 270). CA: Sage Publications.

McAdoo, J. L. (1979). A study of father-child interaction patterns and self-esteem in Black preschool children. *Young children, 34(l)*, 46-53.

McAdoo, J. L. (1981). The roles of African-American fathers in the socialization of the children. In H. P. McAdoo. *Black Families*, (pp. 183-197). CA: Sage Publications.

McAdoo, J. L. (1981). Black father and child interactions. In L. E. Gary (Ed). *Black Men*, (pp. 115-130). CA: Sage Publications.

McAdoo, J. L. (1986). Black fathers' relationships with their preschool children and the children's development of ethnic identity. In R.A. Lewis, and R. E. Salt, (Eds.). *Men In Families*, (pp. 169-179). London: Sage Publications.

McAdoo, J. L. (1988). Changing perspectives on the role of the Black father. In P. Bornstein & C. P. Cowan, (Ed). *Fatherhood Today: Men's Changing Role in the Family*, (pp. 79-91). New York: John Wiley & Sons.

McAdoo, J. L. (1993). The roles of African-American fathers: An ecological perspective. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services, 74(1)*, 28-35.

McAdoo, J. L. & McAdoo J. B. (1988). The African-American father's roles within the family. In R.J. Majors J. Gordon, (Ed). *The American Black Male: His Present and Future Status* (pp. 286-297). Chicago: Nelson Hall.

Moynihan, D. P. (1969). The Negro-American family. In J. F. Kain (Ed.), *Race and Poverty: The Economics of Discrimination* (pp. 38-44). New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Nobles, W. (1978). Africantry: Its role in Black families. In R. Staples (Ed.). *The Black Family: Essays and Studies*, (pp. 19-26). CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co.

Nobles, W. (1985). *Africantry and The Black Family: Development of a Theoretical Model*. CA: Black Family Institute Publications.

Price-Boham, S. & Skeen, P. (1979). *A Comparison of Black and White Fathers With Implications for Parents*. New York: Wiley Publishers.

Rasheed, J. & Johnson, W. (1995). Non-custodial, African-American fatherhood. *Journal of Community Practice*. 2(2), 1-19.

Staples, R. (1985). Changes in Black family structure: The conflict between family ideology and structural conditions. *Journal of Marriage and The Family 47*, 1005-1014.

Staples, R. & Johnson, L. B. (1993). *Black families at the Crossroads, Challenges and Prospects*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc. Publishers.

Taylor, R. (1988). Black males and social policy: Breaking the cycle of the disadvantaged. In R. Majors and J. Gordon, (Ed.). *The American Black Male His Present Status and His Future*. Chicago Nelson Hall Publishers.

Taylor, R. (1991). Child rearing in African-American families. In J. Everett, S. Chipunga, & B. Leashore. *Child Welfare: An Africentric Perspective* (pp. 119-155). New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

Taylor, R. J., Chatters, L. M., Tucker, M. B., Lewis, E. (1990). Developments in research on Black families: A decade review. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 53(4),* 993-1014.

Taylor, R. J., Leashore, B. R. and Tolliver, S. (1988). An assessment of the provider role as perceived by Black males. *Family Relations*, 426-431.

Wade, J. C. (1994). African-American fathers and sons: Social, historical, and psychological considerations. *Families In Society: Journal of Contemporary Human Services.*